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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 55th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HADID (Algeria)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 137: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN SOMALIA II (continued) (A/C.5/48/L.48)

1. Mr. KELLY (Ireland) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/48/L.48 on the financing of the United Nations Operation in Somalia II, and the revisions which had been made to it during informal consultations. A new paragraph had been inserted before paragraph 1, which read: "Takes note of the status of contributions to the United Nations Operation in Somalia, as at 22 March 1994, including the contributions outstanding in the amount of 153,104,873 dollars". In the former paragraph 5, the word "independent" in square brackets should be deleted. In the former paragraph 11, the phrase "promptly and in full" should be replaced by "in full and on time".

2. Despite a long debate, the Committee had been unable to reach any agreement on paragraph 12 bis because of the views of one Member State; it had therefore been deleted. The paragraph, which it had been agreed should be read out during the formal meeting, read: "Expresses its concern at the high level of arrears to its Special Account for the Operation in Somalia II and the resulting cash flow problem, and requests the Secretary-General to draw to the attention of the Member States whose arrears contribute substantively to this problem at a high political level, in order to ensure early payment of those arrears, and to minimize the need for other countries to accept higher levels of fresh assessments than would otherwise be necessary;".

3. Former paragraph 14 reflected the Committee's decision to appropriate to the Special Account for the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) an amount of $639.4 million gross for the period from 1 November 1993 to 31 May 1994. In former paragraph 15, the General Assembly would decide to apportion the amount of $513.2 million gross ($509.2 million net) for the period from 1 November 1993 to 31 May 1994, taking into account the amount of $126.2 million gross ($125 million net) already apportioned in accordance with General Assembly decision 48/471.

4. Paragraphs 17 bis and 17 ter should be deleted and replaced by the following text: "Requests the Secretary-General, in view of the amounts of the unencumbered balances which arise in some peace-keeping operations to study the feasibility of a possible retention of the shares of Member States in the unencumbered balances of peace-keeping operations until the Member States meet all outstanding obligations in respect of the period concerned, and to report to the General Assembly in the context of agenda item 138 no later than 31 May 1994;". It was understood that the Secretary-General's report would also be considered by the Fifth Committee under agenda item 124 (Improving the financial situation of the United Nations). In former paragraph 18, the two portions of the text in square brackets should be replaced by the following: ", the amount of $154,885,034 gross ($152,664,834 net) to be apportioned among Member States in accordance with the scheme set out in the present resolution". In former paragraph 19, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to submit budget proposals in the event that it was decided to continue the

(Mr. Kelly, Ireland)

mandate of the Operation in Somalia II beyond the date currently agreed. Those proposals must, however, be submitted not later than 15 July 1994, rather than 1 September 1994.

5. The CHAIRMAN, replying to a question put by the Netherlands representative, said he believed that all the rules of procedure had been observed. He therefore suggested that the Committee should adopt the draft resolution, as revised, without a vote.

6. It was so decided.

7. Mr. GRANT (United States of America) said that his Government had indicated on several occasions, inter alia, in the statement made by President Clinton in September 1993 and through the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Ms. Albright, that it intended to pay its assessed contribution and arrears in full. The matter had been brought to the attention of Congress. In a statement which she had made to the House of Representatives Ms. Albright had noted that she would be in a better position to press for the adoption of the reforms desired by the United States if she could give an assurance that it would discharge its financial obligations promptly in full. It was, however, true that the United States was not up to date in the payment of its contributions to peace-keeping operations.

8. His delegation had been opposed to the adoption of paragraph 12 bis because it was not convinced that the link established in that paragraph between arrears and an increase in assessments had been proved. Members of the Committee had been unable to obtain from the Secretariat a detailed report on how the Organization succeeded in managing peace-keeping operations despite the fact that the great majority of its Member States had not paid their assessments. While it was true that the troop-contributing countries were being reimbursed late and that funds were being transferred from the accounts of other operations, there was no basis for asserting that the arrears owed by some countries obliged other Member States to accept higher levels of fresh assessments than would otherwise be necessary.

9. Finally, he regretted that it had been decided to refer to the position of one Member State in the statement made to the Committee on the outcome of the informal consultations. In his delegation's view, one of the basic principles for the functioning of the Fifth Committee was that it should try to reach a consensus which satisfied all delegations. It was in that spirit that his delegation had participated, and would continue to participate, in informal consultations on peace-keeping operations.

10. Mr. STITT (United Kingdom) said that, while he welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution as revised, he found it regrettable that paragraph 12 bis had not been included. That paragraph reflected the concerns of Member States which had paid their contributions promptly and in full and to which the Organization owed considerable amounts of money because they contributed large contingents of troops. That opinion, which was shared by a large majority of delegations, was

(Mr. Stitt, United Kingdom)

not aimed at any delegation in particular and he intended to revert to the matter during the forty-eighth session.

11. Mrs. GOICOCHEA (Cuba) deplored the fact that the Fifth Committee's negotiations had been made more difficult as a result of several attempts to introduce elements which did not relate exclusively to the financing of the peace-keeping operation under consideration but had to do with agenda items 138 (Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations) and 124 (Improving the financial situation of the United Nations). Her delegation endorsed paragraph 17 bis of the revised text and hoped that, despite technical difficulties, a study would be submitted in the context of agenda item 124. While her delegation agreed with former paragraph 18, she emphasized that bypassing the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions should remain an exception, that any decision in that regard should be taken during the consideration of each draft resolution, and that the role of the Advisory Committee itself should be considered under agenda item 121 (Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations). While she welcomed the fact that the Chairman had approved of the procedure followed, she regretted that the practice whereby delegations were free to join, or not to join, in a consensus at any moment had not been followed.

12. Ms. ROTHEISER (Austria), pointing out that her country had paid its contributions to peace-keeping operations and to the regular budget of the Organization in full, said that she deeply deplored the fact that, because one delegation had not agreed to it, paragraph 12 bis had not been adopted. Her delegation would try to ensure that the Committee considered that question again under agenda item 138.

13. Mr. BOIN (France) said he thought that it was useful to proceed on a case-by-case basis as that made it possible to identify the substantive problems and to draw up guidelines. He regretted that paragraph 12 bis had had to be deleted. The link between arrears and fresh assessments seemed to him obvious and it shed light on how the Organization managed to function, despite everything. It was also regrettable that the Fifth Committee had not been able to accept the proposal to apportion the unencumbered balances only among those Member States which had paid their assessed contributions, and had merely decided once again to request a report from the Secretary-General. In the computer age, any technical problems that might arise were not insurmountable and some doubt was cast on the Fifth Committee's ability to take practical decisions.

14. Mr. SPAANS (Netherlands) said that his delegation had joined in the consensus despite some shortcomings in the draft resolution and that it had taken note of the procedure followed. It would continue to make proposals designed to improve the Organization's financial situation when other peace-keeping operations were considered and it hoped that other delegations would do likewise. It was regrettable that countries which provided contingents and paid their contributions should have to bear a disproportionate burden; that system was not likely to encourage those States which paid promptly and on time.

(Mr. Spaans, Netherlands)

15. He regretted that paragraph 12 bis, the inclusion of which in the draft resolution would have been a way of supporting the Secretary-General's efforts to improve the Organization's financial situation had not been adopted, and he asked that the paragraph should be included in the summary record. He would, moreover, have liked all delegations to have shown the same flexibility as some had done, and urged all Member States to honour their financial obligations.

16. Mr. KUZNETSOV (Russian Federation) said that his delegation welcomed the consensus that had been reached during the informal consultations on the draft resolution under consideration. It was however concerned about the procedure followed. It was not usual to single out a particular Member State; such a procedure did not help to foster the necessary climate of cooperation. It should therefore not constitute a precedent. His delegation agreed to make concessions when necessary and expected all other delegations to be equally flexible in order to maintain the spirit of consensus which had prevailed in recent years in the Fifth Committee.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

17. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine) said that his delegation shared the view expressed at the previous meeting with respect to the open-ended working group on the placement of Member States into the groups for the apportionment of peace-keeping expenses. Given the importance that his country attached to the smooth operation of such bodies, it would not seem desirable for the group to meet during the resumed session of the Fifth Committee. He therefore proposed that the Bureau of the General Assembly should revise its schedule in order to avoid an overlap. In his view, the group should meet in mid-April at the latest.

The meeting rose at 7.40 p.m.